Implication of Insecurity on Higher Education in South-East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria and Way Forward

Niyi Jacob Ogunode
Ogunodejacob@gmail.com

Conrad Ugochukwu Ukozor
University of Abuja
conradorare@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper discussed implication of insecurity challenges on the higher institutions in the south-east geo-political zone. Secondary data and primary data were used to provide empirical support to some of the points raised in the paper. The paper concluded that disruption of higher education administration, teaching programme, research programme, community service programme, academic calendar, academic programme accreditation, and suspension of infrastructural facilities projects, brain-drain and reduction of academic staff' strength are the impact of insecurity on higher education in south east geo-political zone and the paper recommendation that the federal and state government should address issues responsible for the high rate of insecurity in the region.

Keywords: Africa, Challenges, Higher education, University, West.

Introduction

Nigeria, since **she** returned to democracy in 1999 **has** been facing several forms of insecurity challenges. These insecurity problems spread across all the six geo-political zone. Specifically, one of the most affected **zones** in recent time is the south east geo-political zone of **Nigeria. Ezeobi** (2021) observed that undoubtedly, the growing security threats from Nigeria's South-east region gives cause for concern. But it was not always so. Until recently, the South-east region was arguably the most peaceful part of the country, but now, it has evolved into a hotbed of violence targeting state security institutions by armed men popularly referred to as unknown gunmen. Before 2021, the South-east region was mainly known for the hustle and bustle associated with markets. Although just like other regions, there also were cases of criminal violence manifesting as cult wars, ransom kidnaps and armed robbery. Added to these are sustained episodes of pro-Biafra secessionist agitations that turned fatal in some instances of the insecurity problems in the zone.

Insecurity, as been defined by Ubong, (2016) "occurs whenever people have a feeling of self-doubt, or feel vulnerable and susceptible to injury or harm particularly for a sustained period, insecurity is at work." Onifade, **Imhonopi & Urim** (2013) sees insecurity as a situation where human and national security of a state is compromised by internal or external forces or interests exacerbated by the formers' weak or poor economic, military and/or human resource development conditions. They went further and **observe** that **it is** the lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security. Achumba, **Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro**, (2013) defines insecurity as the antithesis

of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe, and others. Insecurity according to Sanni, (2015) is the sense of vulnerability, defenselessness, lack of protection and danger present in the study area, influencing females' participation in education programmes. **For** Beland (2005), insecurity is "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.

This insecurity in the south **east geo-political zone** is affecting the sustainable development of education in the zone. The problem of insecurity **has** affected primary, secondary and higher education in the zone. Obi (2021) concluded that the insecurity problems facing the south east region **are** disrupting educational institutions **programmes** from the primary schools to the higher **institutions. Onu,** (2022) submitted that stakeholders in higher institutions, just like operators in other sectors of the Southeast's economy, have raised the alarm on the devastating negative effect of the sit-at-home on tertiary institutions in the zone.

Higher education **has** been viewed by different scholars to mean different things. According to Adeyemi (2001), Higher Education is a system which embraces much of the country's research capacity and reproduces majority of the skilled professionals that are required in the labour **market,** while Obanya (1999) disclosed that Higher Education includes all forms of professional institutions drawing from the pool of persons who have completed various forms of secondary school education: Institution of the military, the police, nurses, agriculture, forestry, veterinary workers, catering services, tourism, secretarial services and other combinations of programmes. The National Policy on Education (2004) defines Higher Education as the **Post-Secondary** Section of the National education system, which is given of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology including courses as are given by the Colleges of Education, Advanced Teachers Training colleges, Correspondence Colleges and such institutions as may be allied to them.

Higher institutions in south east **geo-political** zone which is made up of five states have been facing insecurity challenges. It is imperative to examine the impact of insecurity on the higher education in the region. Based on this submission, this paper aimed to discuss the implication of **insecurity** challenges on higher education in south east geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Implication of Insecurity on Higher Education in South-East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria

The implication of insecurity on higher institutions in the south east include; disruption of higher education administration, teaching programme, research programme, community service programme, academic calendar, academic programme accreditation, and suspension of infrastructural facilities projects, brain-drain and reduction of academic staff' strength.

Disruption of Higher Education Administration

Higher education administration in the south-east geo-political zone has been disrupted by the insecurity challenges facing the region especially the sit at home order by **the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).** Higher education administration refers to **organized** activities or programme that deals with arrangement of both human and materials within the institution with the **aim** of achieving the **institutional** goals and objectives. Higher education administration includes planning, supervision of human and materials. Ogunode (2020) defined University administration **as that which** refers to the application of the universities' resources to implement the programme of the universities with the **aim** of realizing the objectives of the universities. University administration is the mobilization and arrangement of both human and materials resources for the achievement of the university's goals. University administration is the effective use of the resources of the university to implement the teaching programme, research programme and the community service programme of the universities. University administration is the deployment of the universities' resources to accomplish the universities' programme. The objectives of university administration include: to implement the programme of the universities as defined; to allocate resources for the implementation of the universities programme; to ensure

implementation of teaching programme, to ensure implementation of research programme; to ensure delivery of quality community services programme, to ensure effective staff development, to ensure effective student administration, to ensure smooth implementation of academic calendar and to ensure quality education. The **sit-at-home** order in the southeast sates is affecting the administration of higher institutions. Every Monday higher institutions in the zone suspends school administration because of fear of attacks. Chukindi,(2021) reported that schools (primary, secondary and higher education), Banks, markets, motor parks and other public places were shut down, in observance of the court appearance of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). DAILY POST reporter observed that streets, highways and communities were totally devoid of passers-by, or any vehicular movement, just as street shops and other business centres were also under lock and keys in Awka, the state capital. It was also gathered that the commercial nerve centre of the state, Onitsha, the state's industrial hub, Nnewi and all communities in the state were totally shut down. All these activities have disrupted higher institution administration in the region.

Disruption of Teaching Programme

The implementation of teaching programme in some of the higher **institutions** across the zone has also been affected by the insecurity challenges. Teaching programme is the first cardinal programme of the higher institutions (**Edokhamhen &** Ogunode, 2020). Tertiary Educational institutions are saddled with the three cardinal **programmes** which include teaching programme, research programme and community service programme. Teaching programme is one of the most important **programmes** of the tertiary institutions. Teaching programme is one of the **indicators** used to measure the standard of tertiary institutions. Teaching is a **process whereby** professional **individuals** carry out instruction to the students with the **aim** of modifying their behaviors. Teaching is a systematic act that involves imparting instructions to the learners in the classroom situation either in basic school, secondary school and tertiary institutions. *Teaching* programme is an organized process of **attending and providing** services to the learners. *Teaching* programme is the act **of** giving **instructions** in a basic school or a secondary school or in a university. Teaching programme constitutes the teachers, students and teaching and learning resources. The teachers' qualifications, experiences and leadership skills **matter** in the implementation of teaching programme (**Ogunode & Ndayebom** (2022). Some higher institutions especially the universities have suspended academic activities every Monday due to the sit at home order in the region. Many students and lecturers cannot come to school because of the insecurity. The Nation learnt that students and lecturers were willing, but it was difficult to access the institution because drivers to take them to the campus were not available as a result of the sit-at-home. Besides, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Charles Esimone, she said, did not want to risk the lives of students or **lecturers**. Both Igbariam and Uli campuses of the **Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu** University, Anambra State, always witnessed skeletal academic activities on Mondays as reported by (Onu, 2022). A senior lecturer in one of the higher institutions in the region, said major activities were deliberately not fixed for Mondays due to the near-absence of members of staff and students. "Initially, we tried to force students to attend lectures and other activities on Mondays. But when we discovered that students scarcely came to school, we had to leave out Mondays," the lecturer said. For Prof. **Obasi Igwe**, apart from the negative impact on the economy of the region, education sector is on the line, as the exercise now leaves institutions empty (Onu, 2022). **Ahaotu & Ogunode**, (2021) stressed that insecurity on campus negatively affects the learning processes. It breeds fear and feelings of insecurity amongst students and staff of tertiary institutions and sometimes leads to disruption of the academic calendar. The disruption of learning on the campus threatens the development of the nation because no nation can rise beyond the capacities of her tertiary institutions.

Disruption of Research Programme

Research programme in some higher institutions in **the** south east **geo-political** zone **has** been suspended due to insecurity challenges. Ogunode, Jegede, **Adah, Audu & Ajape** (2020) opined

that higher institutions are known for conducting researches. Higher institutions' major programmes are teaching, researching, and community services. Ogunode **& Abubakar** (2020) submitted that research is the second cardinal programme of higher institutions. Research is very important to the development of the society. Research is conducted mostly in the higher institutions environment with the objectives to solve problems affecting the society. The academic staff is saddled with the responsibilities of carrying out researches in the universities. Conducting research is one criterion for measuring their performance. Researchers, lecturers and students carrying out different researches in the south east zone **have** been forced to either suspend the research programme or abandon them because of insecurity **problems. Onu, (2022)** noted that the insecurity has affected the movement of students, lecturers and researchers when he said "Apart from the University of Nigeria, which has some of its staff and students living inside the institution, all other tertiary institutions in the Southeast have their staff and students living off campus. This is why you **cannot** find anyone in any school on Mondays or any day IPOB may determine as sit-at-home day. This means that no teaching or learning takes place on these days. "Another evil this sit-at-home has brought upon us is that no conference or seminar holds anymore in the Southeast because of the fear of the attacks that might result from sit-at-home as reported by (Onu, 2022). **Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu & Ajape** (2020) and Ogunode **& Abubakar** (2020) observed **that insecurity** is a major problem affecting the administration of research programmes in the Nigerian public universities. Many research **programmes** in the Nigerian public universities have been put to hold or stopped, especially in the universities in the Northern part of Nigeria because of the insecurity challenges leading to close of universities.

Disruption of Community Service Programme

Insecurity in the South east region has also affected the community service programme of the higher institutions in the zone. Higher institutions are known for carrying out community service programme in their respective host communities. Ogunode, **& Audu** (2022) viewed community service programme **as** the third cardinal programme of the tertiary institutions. Community service programme is an organized and planned service programme of higher institutions for the benefit and betterment of their host community. Community service programme of higher institutions are community inclined services initiated by the institutions to develop the communities. Community **services** of higher institution are services provided by institutions to **benefit** the community people. Community **service programmes** are done near the area where the institutions are located so that the host community can **enjoy** the benefits of the institutions. Community service of higher **institutions** include all kinds of services that **are** meant to improve the wellbeing of the people and the society **in** general. Community **services** are essential **services** designed by institutions to provide socio-economic development to the community. The insecurity challenges especially the **sit-at-home** order and kidnapping issues **have** disrupted community service programme of some institutions in the southeast zone. Ogunode, **& Audu** (2022) submitted that insecurity problem in Nigeria and attacks on tertiary institutions **are** also affecting the development of community services programme and their implementation in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020) observed that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country.

Disruption of Academic calendar

The insecurity in the south east geo-political **zone has** affected the academic calendar of higher institutions in the zone. Uzoma (2021) observed that IPOB now use the sit-at-home thing to deny the higher institutions in **the** south east certain opportunities that have to do with hosting certain programmes. I want to tell you that if the academic system is still as sacrosanct as it used to be in the past, students from the Southeast would not be able to compete with others from other regions because, so far, we have lost four straight months to sit-at-home. "If you calculate how many Mondays our students have been out of school since August last year, you will begin to

appreciate how fast the education system in the Southeast has been descending into the abyss,"

Disruption of Academic Programme Accreditation

The insecurity challenges in the south east region have also affected academic programme accreditation of many higher institutions. **Ogunode &** Samuel (2022) observed that Programme accreditation is a special programme of all higher institutions. Regulatory bodies of different higher institutions are saddled with the responsibilities of periodically ensuring new *programmes* are accredited and old *programme*s are also checked for fitness. In Nigeria, National Universities Commission [NUC], National Commission for Colleges of Education [NCCE] and the National Board for Technical Education [NBTE] are the institutions in charge of programme accreditation. The strikes embarked by different **union** groups in the higher institutions always lead to the suspension of programme accreditation in the higher institutions (Ogunode, **Ukozor, & Jegede** 2022). A lecturer in one of the tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Dr. **Ifediora Uzoma**, lamented that the sit-at-home had denied institutions in the Southeast opportunities. "Sit-at-home has negatively impacted [**on**] academics in tertiary institutions in the Southeast in many ways others which are government-owned have succumbed to the threats of sit-at-home on Mondays and other days IPOB announces as sit-at-home**" (Onu, 2022).** Ogunode, Okwelogu, Enyinnaya, **& Yahaya** (2021) observed that many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted in school closure leading to an unstable academic program. The continuous school closure disrupts the accreditation calendar of the National **Universities Commission**.

Suspension of Infrastructural Facility Projects

The insecurity challenges in the south eastern Nigeria **have** prevented and slow down infrastructural facilities development in the higher institutions in the region. Many construction works going on in some of the higher institution permanent site have been **abandoned** because of insecurity. Some school projects are located in rural areas with less security personnel. Many **contractors** have **abandoned** construction **sites** because of fear of attacks and fear of been kidnapped. **Ogunode & Murtala**, (2022) observed that insecurity problem facing the country now is another big factor responsible for project abandonment in Public Universities in Nigeria. Many contractors across the country have left project **sites** because of insecurity, projects especially in the **Northeast and Southeast** have been abandoned by various contractors handling them because of attacks and killing of their workers. Ogunode (2020); Ogunode **& Atobauka**, (2021a) and Ogunode, **Jegede &** Musa (2021) stated that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. Several various attacks on the universities have resulted to school closure leading to unstable academic programme and suspension of capital projects.

Brain-drain

The insecurity challenges in the **southeast** geo-political zone of Nigeria have led to brain-drain in some of the institutions located in the region. **For Ogunode (2020)** Brain-drain refers to the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for a better job offers. Brain-drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pasture. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria to other part of African countries and Europe for a better job offer and conducive working environment. Many academic and non-academic staff are leaving some of the public and private higher institutions located in the region. Musa (2021) submitted that "the sit-at-home is also helping the migration of students from here to other regions of the country and responsible for the movement of lecturers from the **region too".** Ogunode (2020) identified insecurity as one of the major causes of brain-drain in the Nigerian higher institutions.

Reduction of Academic Staff

The insecurity in the **southeast** zone is reducing the number of academic staff in the zone. Many

lecturers have been attacked and killed in the region. Ripples (2021a) reported that lecturer with the Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Mr. **Kyrian Nwoke**, has been killed by unknown assailants. Also, Ripples (2021) reported that two lecturers of the Abia State University, Uturu, and others were robbed and kidnapped by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen along Uturu – Isuikwuato Road on Thursday evening. Casmir (2019) reported that **some gunmen** suspected to be herdsmen, on Thursday in Enugu State, killed one **Dr Nnamdi Ogueche**, a senior lecturer at the **Nnamdi Azikwe** University, Awka, Anambra State. Also, **Okeoma,** (2021) reported that a lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences was kidnapped at a Pharmacy at the Imo State University, Owerri, by gunmen on Friday night. Nkama (2019) submitted that one time Head of Department, Private and Property Law, Imo State University, **Prof. Reginald Onuoha was** recently kidnapped by unknown **gunmen. The** continuous attacks on the academic staff and the killing of **others are** reducing the strength of academic staff in the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Insecurity problem is a major problem affecting the **southeast** geo-political zone. This paper looked at the **implications** of insecurity on higher institutions in the **southeast** and the paper identified the **implications** to include; disruption of higher education administration, teaching programme, research programme, community service programme, academic calendar, academic programme accreditation, and suspension of infrastructural facilities projects, brain-drain and reduction of academic staff.

To address the challenges of insecurity in the **southeast** geo-political zone, the paper suggested the following;

1) The federal government should adopt political solution strategy to address some of the insecurity challenges facing **southeast** geo-political zone.

2) **The** government, both federal and state government should **go into dialogue.** Such dialogue should involve the federal and state governments, IPOB representatives, traditional rulers, women's organisations, youth groups, security forces and civil society organisations. These critical stakeholders need to discuss possible solutions to state-specific insecurity and their links to the broader dynamics of violence in the region.

3) State governments should work on a zonal framework to articulate and pursue a robust development blueprint for the region. This should include targeted empowerment **programmes designed** for unemployed youths to minimise their vulnerability to recruitment by separatist and criminal group

4) The federal government should give approval to state policing which many developed countries have adopted, because this will certainly curb to the barest minimal insecurity challenges being experienced, not only in the southeast geo-political zone but to other regions of the country.

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